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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 180 (2015) 696 – 701

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

The 6th International Conference Edu World 2014 “Education Facing Contemporary World Issues”, 7th - 9th November 2014

## Optimizing strategies for the inter-individual relationships in primary school through the extracurricular activities

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### Abstract

There had always been sympathies and antipathies based on the expressed behaviour, these governing human relationships. We chose to highlight the importance of the inter-individual relationships between pupils because they are the foundation of the whole system of relationships that develops each of us. This paper presents a study aimed at optimizing the inter-individual relationships at pupils from primary school, through extracurricular activities carried out within the week, “School otherwise: To know more, to be better!”, these study was conducted at a school in Cluj-Napoca. The learning groups accustom pupils with a flexible thinking and a sense of responsibility.

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Peer-review under responsibility of The Association “Education for tomorrow” / [Asociatia “Educatie pentru maine”].

**Keywords:** extracurricular, free choice, performance, optimization;

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### 1. Introduction

Extracurricular activities have a rich tradition in Romanian education system, even if they did not focus on program and compulsory curriculum, as is in present, under the new National Education Law (NEL) from 2011. Structuring these types of activities, as shown in the Regulation on organization and operation of establishments providing extracurricular educational activity, the introduction of new concepts (e.g. non-formal education - new concept in relation to the recognition of the NEL) represents important legislative changes that have the aim to improve the quality of these activities. The new vision of system focuses not only on educational performance

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(Romanian education has a long tradition in this respect), but also on the practical skills, coupled with labor market requirements, developing the child's personality and of the young people for life in general (Păun, 1999).

## 2. Material and Methods

The extracurricular activities aimed generally those activities with complementary role to traditional teaching-learning classes. Their range is difficult to delimit. Can be tours and visits to museums, cinemas, theatres, opera, ballet, can be tours and visits to public institutions or other objectives of community interest, can be visits to other schools, can be artistic activities, of hobby, thematic clubs and teams sports activities, can be linked to a newspaper or radio of school, activities related to environmental protection, or activities related to student councils. Extracurricular activities come to complete the child's education through an attractive approach, are a continuation of the work in the class by which we must pursue deepening the knowledge and education of students.

The intellectual cooperation in the classroom, says Pănişoară (2008), helps to improve individual intellectual benefits, affecting scholar performance of students. Group members become more aware of the form of expression, the precision of ideas, of understanding their partner and auto control of self-attitudes. Interactions manifests intellectually through a daily exchange of information, through correction of opinions or judgments, through mutual appreciation of the results obtained and the used models.

The first strategy aims **the constitution of working groups**. The manner in which the working group is designed for each activity with students is critical to diverse relational field between them. If students are always in the same mini-group of class with the same composition, the trend is of competition between groups, by their successes comparison (Mihăescu, 2012). To obtain a "branched cloth" relationships between all students in the classroom, it is necessary that the working group to be established with other combinations of students ever, which brought him into contact "all with all" by rotation in this variant (Creţu, 2009).

The tendency of students to reject collaboration with some colleagues is stopped working in this way, because of the need to obtain the final product of the team. Gradually the antipathy makes room to joy and success, and feelings transferred and transformed readily to acceptance of those initially rejected.

Another strategy concerns **how to improve communication**. Communication that uses a language of responsibility is a valuable communication. The language of responsibility is a way of communication open even for topics that may be possible outbreaks of conflict. It is a form of communication through which their opinions and emotions are expressed without attacking the other person and also a model to avoid labeling, criticism, moving discussion toward self-effects: "I feel that ..., suffer if ... I want to ... ". Students use such language only to the extent that they were taught to do, taking the model of the teacher (Fluerăş, 2003).

The encouragement of staff to be involved in projects and extracurricular activities energizes the life and work of the students, moving towards a high quality development of relations between group members.

This paper *presents* a qualitative and quantitative study aimed to optimize inter-relations of students from first class, through extracurricular activities started in week „School otherwise: To know more, to be better! ” and continued during the second semester.

### **The purpose of the research:**

Identification of optimization strategies of inter-individual relations of pupils in first degree class through extracurricular activities started in week "School otherwise: To know more, to be better!" and continued during the second semester.

### **Research objectives (O):**

O1. The design, organization and implementation of extracurricular activities, optimizing inter relationships of pupils from class;

O2. The use of specific techniques and procedures in the Group in conducting extracurricular activities for a positive and valuable relationship between the pupils of the class;

O3. Recording, monitoring and comparing the results obtained by pupils in first class.

O4. Analysis of the results of the undertaken activities.

The **hypothes(H)** is behind the research was formulated as:

H1 - The systematic use of specific strategies of extracurricular activities lead to the development of networking skills by attitudes of acceptance, cooperation and tolerance at the pupils of first class.

H2 - The independent variable is the experimental factor controlled or manipulated by the researcher, respectively by the modification which he introduced to study the effects they produced (Bocoș, 2003). In this case the independent variable is represented by the systematic use of specific strategies of some extracurricular activities to pupils in first class.

The dependent variable represents the effect and results of students following the introduction of the independent variable (Bocoș, 2003). In the conducted experiment the dependent variable is represented by the level of networking through attitudes of acceptance, cooperation and tolerance at the first class pupils.

Type of research: observant research and act aimed at the relational field between pupils. Place: Elementary School Poiana Codrului, Satu Mare County, teacher Noțigan Ana, research period: second semester of school year 2013-2014.

The sample of participants was a unique sample consisted of a total of 31 pupils of class I A to which was applied an independent variable, aiming and quantifying the produced effect in different stages.

The **content** sample. In this research were conducted a series of extracurricular activities in the week: "School otherwise: To know more, to be better!" with different themes. Activities were during the second semester. This research included a methodology which comprises sociometric methods.

The applied **reflexive journal** was focused on aspects as feelings and experienced attitudes (lived) during extracurricular activities. It was designed based on two items:

- an open item: your impression about the work of today,
- a closed item: Tick the right image that expresses how you feel today.

**Survey method** is a method of interactive type of research, which involves an directly exchange of information between the researcher and the subjects under investigation, in which, data are collected (opinions, facts, educational needs, interests, motivations, knowledge, behaviours, desires, aspirations, etc.) in connection with certain events and situations. The survey makes possible the realization of extensive research by collecting data and information from a large mass of individuals, in order to know how much further the investigated phenomena and of course, in conjunction with the research hypothesis.

The specific instrument used in surveys is **the questionnaire**, which is a system of questions, usually written, well-structured in a specific sequence, based on methodological considerations, logical and psychological. By **applying the sociometric test** we obtained incipient valuable data, the profile / level of unique general group, internal composition, and structural value.

**The sociometric test** included the following questions addressed to pupils:

- "With whom would you prefer to collaborate in a team, at all activities in school and out of school?"
- The indication was to nominate three colleagues, in order of preference (the first considered the most important, then the next two in order of preference).
- "With whom you do not want to cooperate in team activities at school and outside of school?"
- Requirement was similar to the previous situation, but this time each student had to nominate the rejected colleagues.
- The data based on the criteria - collaboration in regular learning activities showed that within the group of pupils were established relationships and inter-relations. The relations of acceptance / rejection deducted from the study led to the establishment of the status occupied by each student in the group.
- Pupils with the status of favorite, leaders: 1 pupil MS -21 elections (A) / 0 rejection (R).
- This pupil get the best results in teaching, is very ambitious. Working with her has been considered by other students a chance to get good school results. The fact that she received no rejection demonstrates that she herself is actively involved in collaborative tasks regarding scholar curricula.
- Pupils with middle status, accepted in part: 16 pupils.
- These students are receiving more choices than rejection or received equal number of choices / rejection, being partially accepted by the collective.
- The large number of students with middle status indicates that they have a positive attitude towards the colleagues and are able to relating with peers, but because of their behavior they receive also rejections.

- Pupils with partial excluded status: 9 pupils
- The number of elections received by these students is smaller than the number of refusals. The number of rejections received (range 0-8) indicates that they are rejected by the collective. The reasons for that are rejected by the collective are: shyness, a weaker concern in establishing interpersonal relationships with colleagues.
- Pupils with status of excluded, isolated of group: 5 students.
- The fact that these students received rejections in large numbers, required to identify causes which determined the facts and establishing ways in which to be accepted by the collective. The aim was to encourage the timid to increase their self-esteem by involving them in teams were to be accepted, the development of a behavior that favors intensification of sympathy towards the group they belong to.

### 3. Discussions

The made collective sociograms, provided a graphic image of the social status of pupils from the work sample. Based on data contained in both collective sociograms, appear partners from whom and to who are directed the likes and dislikes (see figure 1).

After applying sociometric methods were drawn the following conclusions / *results*:

- In the group of classroom are developed preferential inter-relationships: attraction, rejection, indifference, ignorance.
- The quality of inter-relationships between investigated pupils is perceived in a negative manner (one leader, 16 pupils accepted partially, 9 pupils excluded partially, 5 pupils excluded totally).
- Knowledge of sympathy and antipathy relationships between students helps organize class activities, the establishment of working groups.
- The socio-emotional climate so determined may direct the organization of curricular and extracurricular involvement, by mobilizing pupils in conducting various group activities.
- The research hypothesis or the use of systematic strategies - anyway is good "systematic use of specific strategies of extracurricular activities lead to the development of networking skills by attitudes of acceptance, cooperation and tolerance at the first class pupils" was confirmed, because this research has shown that organization of regular extracurricular activities in heterogeneous teams, has enabled the development of attachment relationships, increasing communication, turning these relationships into friendships.
- Through the use of teaching strategies adapted to extracurricular activities, specific techniques and procedures (contests, role playing, dramatizations, relay, tutorials, experiments, visits, meetings with parents, creative activities), of teaching means (books, posters, stories, toys, natural materials, recycled materials) and ways of organizing collectives on groups, favorites the development of inter-relationships at pupils (Stan, 2006).
- The dynamics of team captured the essential transformations that took place in interpersonal relations between the investigated pupils after experimenting extracurricular activities. There have been changes in interpersonal relations within the group of pupils. Thus the number of pupils with leadership status increased, the number of pupils accepted partially and partially excluded increased, the status of totally excluded pupils disappearing.
- It can be said that the interaction from the forms of organization on teams of the group of pupils in an extracurricular activity, may prevent marginalization of some of them. Marginalization of five students in the class was avoided through extracurricular activities undertaken, due to the communication methods, organizing and involving pupils in different activities.

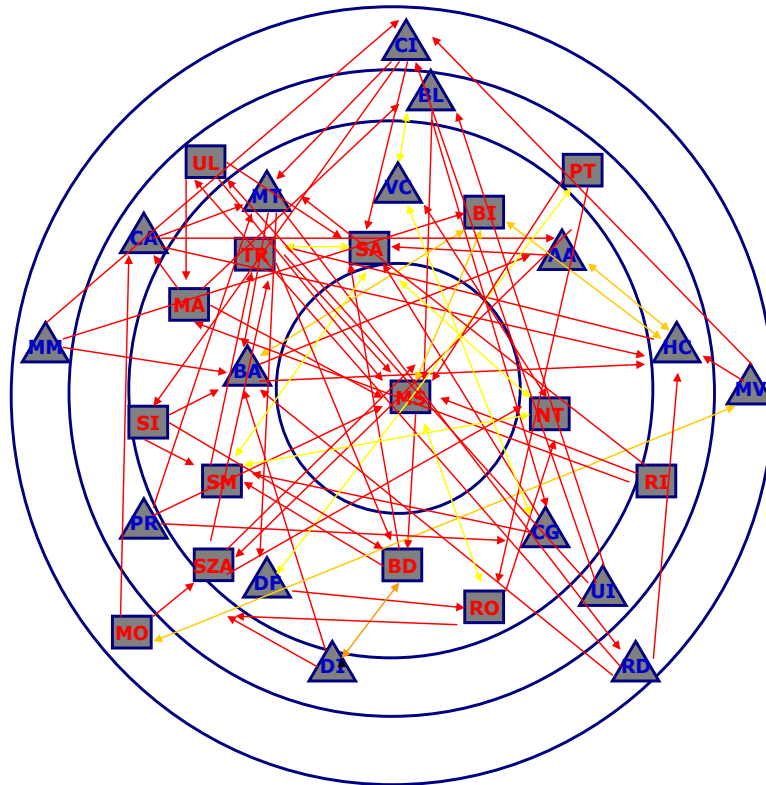


Fig. 1. The initial collective sociogram of choices (red lines – likes, yellow lines – dislikes, the letters represent the pupils)

#### 4. Conclusions

On the whole, extracurricular activities are combined in a valuable and effective educational component to which is necessary to be awarded the full attention, both in the design and implementation way, as well in the establishing relationships with pupils and between pupils. Ensuring confidence, mental relaxation allows pupils fructification of the new relationship situations. Permanent interdisciplinary relations facilitates knowledge transfer and the extracurricular and non-academic activities are most visible opportunities for linking theory with practice, where the student is the directly beneficiary. Regardless of what types are, these activities contribute effectively to prepare pupils for social integration, provide direct manifestation of many skills, inventiveness and creativity of pupils.

*Optimization strategies of inter relations are very important to students through extracurricular activities.* Emulation in the classroom is a labile mechanism that can spiral out of control, leading by her slipping on the slope of individualism, the emergence of small rivalries in class group. In this situation, the teacher should intervene tactfully to guide the evolutionary mechanism in constructive meaning in the pupils collective.

The class of pupils constitutes a socio-cultural environment in which occurs modeling process of the pupils. The group becomes a source of values with formative influence on individual self-development. The web of relationships in class, the activity and yield differences, in complexity of emotional atmosphere, the pupil defines his human condition. He capitalizes in the group and to group, makes changes in their personality and actively contributes to the process of social maturation. This fabric of relations becomes in the process of growing the source of conduct or aspirations.

After Iucu (2005), in the organized classes in a way that stimulate cooperation, the whole team gets good results.

Involving pupils in extracurricular activities appealing to a strategy which aims direct forms of cooperation in realizing the objectives, form them a proper conduct in a double sense: developing inter-relational skills by attitudes

of acceptance, cooperation and tolerance and self-affirmation, and manifestation of behaviors of self-affirmation in the team but in a manner of emotional commitment to the group.

The research has been and will be exploited and disseminated by:

- methodological papers within the teachers;
- activities where were invited parents of the enrolled children's in research, fellows, collaborators;
- scientific sessions, symposia;
- articles in books, magazines.

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